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HOLIDAY GIFTS: GET IT RIGHT THIS YEAR

WHAT TO BUY THE PICKIEST PEOPLE ON YOUR LIST PAGES 22-25

metro

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Thursday, December 11, 2014 www.metro.us | t: MetroNewYork | f: MetroNewYork



Pause for prayer

Crown Heights. Members of the orthodox Chabad-Lubavitch Jewish movement returned to prayer in the same study room where police on Tuesday shot dead a man who stabbed a visiting yeshiva student. PAGE 02



SantaCon hires famous civil rights lawyer

PAGE 06

Kim K's baby weight gain was God's wrath

PAGE 14



Where to keep the fun going in winter

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NFL agents weigh in on Jets and GM John Idzik

PAGE 30

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Top 3

The best of Metro.us

1 'Hacked Sony emails uncover huge Angelina Jolie slam by Scott Rudin'

2 '3 tips for beating the winter blues'

3 'The worst people Time magazine has chosen as "Person of the Year"'



On the go

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Yeshiva back to normal after brutal knife attack

Crown Heights.

Worshippers return to a shrine of study, determined to persevere.

Members of a Crown Heights orthodox Jewish community are recovering following a brutal attack at the Chabad-Lubavitch sect's headquarters that left one rabbinical student seriously wounded and the attacker shot dead by police.

"This is something that's never happened before," said Heshel Frankel, a Brooklyn resident and longtime visitor to the religious center. "It's a rare occurrence, hopefully."

In the early hours of Tuesday morning, 49-year-old Calvin Peters entered the organization's main building on Eastern Parkway and stabbed 22-year-old Levi Rosenblat in the temple. After a standoff with police, Peters was shot dead when he grabbed a knife and lunged at a cop.

Rosenblat, who was visiting from Israel, was "alert and resting" in the intensive-care unit at Bellevue on Wednesday afternoon, said a statement from Chabad.

Peters shouted he wanted to "kill the Jews" before he attacked Rosenblat, said Chabad-Lubavitch spokesperson Rabbi Motti Seligson. The attack unnerved the observant community, as it followed a mid-November attack on orthodox Jewish worshippers in a Jerusa-



A man recites prayers at the Chabad-Lubavitch headquarters in Crown Heights on Wednesday. / CARLOS LLAMAS

lem synagogue that left five dead, including one rabbi with strong ties to New York.

The sect, which runs a network of religious community centers across the Jewish diaspora, was struck by terrorists in

2008, when an attack on its center in Mumbai by Pakistani terrorists left nine people dead.

Two of the victims in the 2008 attack were from Brooklyn.

Tuesday's attack on the group's Brooklyn head-

quarters, an important destination for adherents to the 250-year-old Hasidic movement, rattled followers.

"This is the headquarters, this is where [the movement] began and this is where everyone

returns annually for the conference," said 24-year-old Mendel Konikov, a Crown Heights resident and member of the sect. "It's a hub for the Chabad network. That's what brings out the strong emotions and connections to the location."

Close to a dozen cops lined the outside of the Crown Heights Chabad while a pair of police vans idled across the street. Mayor Bill de Blasio promised increased police presence at all Jewish religious institutions in the wake of the attack.

Despite the heightened security, members of the group said they looked forward to returning to their routines.

"I came here this morning and apart from the police outside, I did not notice anything different," said Frankel, 71.

Inside the synagogue, worshippers gathered for prayer services Wednesday and invited passersby to put on tefillin, leather boxes containing written prayers, that are bound to the arm and forehead and said to protect those wearing it.

"Going forward is obviously very important," said Konikov, who called the local group of worshippers a "close and warm community that supports each other," especially in times of turmoil.

"These people are very resilient," said Frankel, "this is not going to stop them."

DAN BUYANOVSKY
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Tech City

Free Wi-Fi plan gets go ahead from city

A committee responsible for approving city contracts signed off on the de Blasio administration's plan to replace 6,400 of the city's outdated pay phones with 24/7 Wi-Fi hubs offering

free local calling and mobile charging stations.

The \$200 million project — named LinkNYC — won't cost taxpayers a dime, city officials said. It'll rely on an expected \$500 million in advertising revenue through 2026, when the contract expires.

Wi-Fi users whose phones have location-track-

ing apps could find their data used by Titan, the outdoor media company that's leading the Wi-Fi program's rollout. They may also receive targeted ads, the city's IT department said.

No data collected after users log onto the Wi-Fi network would be provided to advertisers, the city said.

Amid press reports that

the free Wi-Fi will be more widely available in wealthier neighborhoods, Bronx City Councilman Jimmy Vacca, told Metro he would use his oversight powers to ensure the program "delivers services equitably to all five boroughs."

Construction on the kiosks is expected to begin in early 2015. **METRO**



A Wi-Fi point in Brooklyn
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NEW YORK

4

Writer dies in East Village fire

Victim. Evelyn Dahab was 33.

Evelyn Dahab, a 33-year-old writer, died early Wednesday morning after her East Village basement apartment caught fire, police said.

The Manhattan-based author released a 2011 memoir and had been a co-owner of Luce's Lounge in Gowanus, Brooklyn.

Bar owner Henry Lopez remembered Dahab as a fiery, committed personality who "lived hard."

"She was a good friend to a lot of people, and she had a lot of loyalty from her friends and family," he said.

"She left us way too soon. We're going to miss her," he said. "People like her don't grow on trees."

Police said Dahab was pulled out of the building and declared dead by paramedics at the scene. It took firefighters 30 minutes to extinguish the blaze. They have not yet determined a cause.

In October, Dahab took to her Facebook page to announce she would move from the apartment building after a months-long fight with the landlord. In the same post, she announced she would host one final Christmas Eve party that would go "down in the annals of NYC history."



Evelyn Dahab / FACEBOOK



CHESTER SORIA
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Drugs. Woman caught at JFK with \$230K of coke in custard package

A security dog sniffed out 13 pounds of cocaine in the bags of a U.S. citizen passing through customs at Kennedy Airport last month, Customs and Border Protection said Wednesday.

K-9 Elza smelled something funny in a suitcase belonging to American citizen Tricia

Ann D'Aguiar, and agents found six bags labeled as powdered milk and custard that tested positive for cocaine.

The haul had a street value of about \$230,000.

D'Aguiar had arrived

from Georgetown, Guyana, and was handcuffed at the airport soon after. She now faces federal narcotics smuggling charges, and will be prosecuted by the U.S. Attorney in New York's Eastern District Court. **METRO**



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Public service

MTA warns against phone distraction

A trio of TV and Web PSAs released Wednesday warn mass transit passengers, pedestrians and cyclists that cellphones and buses don't mix.

Despite a 14 percent drop in bus collisions with pedestrians and a 6 percent drop with cyclists, the agency says it will air the ads locally to further prevent accidents.

The dramatized skits include a cyclist taking selfies and texting before hitting the rear end of a parked bus. **METRO**

Crime

Police shootings dropped in 2013

Police shootings of suspects are down in New York City, and no cop lives were lost in shootings with aggressors.

Shootings of "adversarial suspects" dropped 11 percent in 2013, to 40 last year from 45 in 2012, the NYPD said Wednesday. The number of suspects shot by police is at its low-

est since 2010 when there were 33 shootings.

Seventeen of last year's 40 suspects were shot and injured; eight were killed by police. That's a drop of 50 percent from 2012.

Most of the cops involved in the shootings were on duty either working their beats on foot or in cars in response to 911 calls.

The report also said internal investigations of nine police shootings from last year cleared all officers. **METRO**

By the numbers

46

Forty-six internal investigations remain in progress.

50%

Nearly half of last year's shootings were in Brooklyn.



Daiana Mielnik, 31, was one of two women to graduate from the fire academy in 2005. / WENDY JOAN BIDDLECOMBE

FDNY needs more women, less testing

Equality. Female firefighters say the academy sets them up to flunk out.

Tehran, Philadelphia and San Francisco have more women firefighters than New York City.

Only 44 women are firefighters among the FDNY's 10,500-strong force.

City Council member Elizabeth Crowley says women are targeted by rigorous testing in the city's Fire Academy that forces more women than men to fail out of the school.

"The academy is supposed to be for training, not continued testing," Crowley said, adding women who enter the academy are already evaluated to be physically and mentally fit for the job.

On Wednesday, Crowley and other supporters of female firefighters rallied at City Hall before a hearing on boosting the number of women in the FDNY.

In San Francisco, 13 percent of firefighters are women, Council member Helen Rosenthal said. Some 18 percent of the NYPD are women, and 13 percent of U.S. combat troops are female.

"In New York City, the number is 0.4 percent. It's appallingly low," said



Elizabeth Crowley speaks. / WENDY JOAN BIDDLECOMBE

Quoted

"When people are timed, it's a push to rush, rush, rush through it, and not really do things properly."

Daiana Mielnik, 31, who was one of two women to graduate from the academy in 2005.

Rosenthal, who's sponsoring a bill that would require the FDNY to keep track of academy entrance and graduation statistics. "What we need is the fire department to justify why that's the case, why it is that New York City is so wildly unique."

The FDNY would need to hire more than 400 women to be on par with cities across the country, said Sarinya Srisakul, president of the United Women Firefighters.

In a message read by Srisakul, one female firefighter said her training was "so brutal and excessive" she felt like a "ghost" at the end.

"They just tried to weed her out, and that's the type of psychological and physical damage that we're talking about," Srisakul said.

"We need to ensure we are using all resources to help women navigate through the hiring and academy process successfully," Fire Commissioner Daniel Nigro said at the hearing.

Nigro said an outside consultant will be coming to the academy in 2015 to make recommendations on physical training and female recruits.

According to the FDNY, 1,952 women took the firefighter test in 2012.



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SantaCon. Revelers hire attorney to fight for their right to party

SantaCon got itself a little helper days before its scheduled to take over of a New York City neighborhood.

Famed New York civil rights attorney Norman Siegel signed up to help the much-maligned revelers get their act together in time for Saturday's planned SantaCon gathering.

"People have a right to express themselves as long as they're in the confines of the First Amendment," Siegel told Metro.

SantaCon's organizers describe the yearly event as "a charitable, non-commercial, non-political, nonsensical Santa Claus convention that happens once a year for absolutely no reason."

Opponents see it as a drunken bar crawl.

Siegel, a former executive director of the New York Civil Liberties Union, said he was approached by two of the event's organizers last week. He



Siegel / BESS ADLER, METRO

Quoted

"Lawyers don't dress in Santa outfits."

Siegel

said he's giving the group the benefit of the doubt to show him that SantaCon is worth whatever troubles critics say they bring to neighborhoods.

Siegel said he took the case free of charge, and is consulting with organizers about what they should

and must do to keep the peace on Saturday.

The attorney will join the party as an observer on Saturday. He won't be dressed up in red and white, despite his new clients' offer for a suit.

"Lawyers don't dress in Santa outfits," Siegel said.

Organizers released no details as to where the bar-hopping party will take place, but the list of neighborhoods unwilling to host thousands of imbibing St. Nicks and elves keeps growing.

Business groups in Bushwick, the Lower East Side and Chinatown say they won't play nice with SantaCon's naughty reputation.

Siegel said the organizers have been in touch with police ahead of their party this weekend, and are working to legitimize the event further — possibly into a march.

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Chicago proposes chokehold ban in wake of protests

Ordinance.

The proposal is expected to go before a full city council vote in January.

Chicago city council members have proposed a ban on the use of chokeholds by police officers working within city limits in an expansive proposal coming in the wake of the chokehold death of an unarmed black man being arrested in New York.

The proposal, which includes all security personnel such as deputy sheriffs, U.S. Marshals and private security

guards, is the first among municipalities attempting to regulate arrest techniques after a grand jury last week declined to indict a New York City police officer in the chokehold death.

Council members in favor of the ban, which was introduced this week to the city's finance committee, say they want Chicago in front of the issue of excessive police force that has resulted in street protests across the nation.

The Chicago ordinance defines a chokehold as "any pressure to the throat or windpipe, which may prevent or hinder breathing or reduce intake of air."

A group of New York City council members are

Quoted

"Chicago would lead the way for other cities across America to expeditiously act to institute similar protections."

Will Burns, city council member

proposing a similar ordinance, which has not yet gone to the council for a vote. It does not include security personnel outside the police department, however.

New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio opposes criminalizing chokeholds, saying he prefers it to be a matter of department policy.

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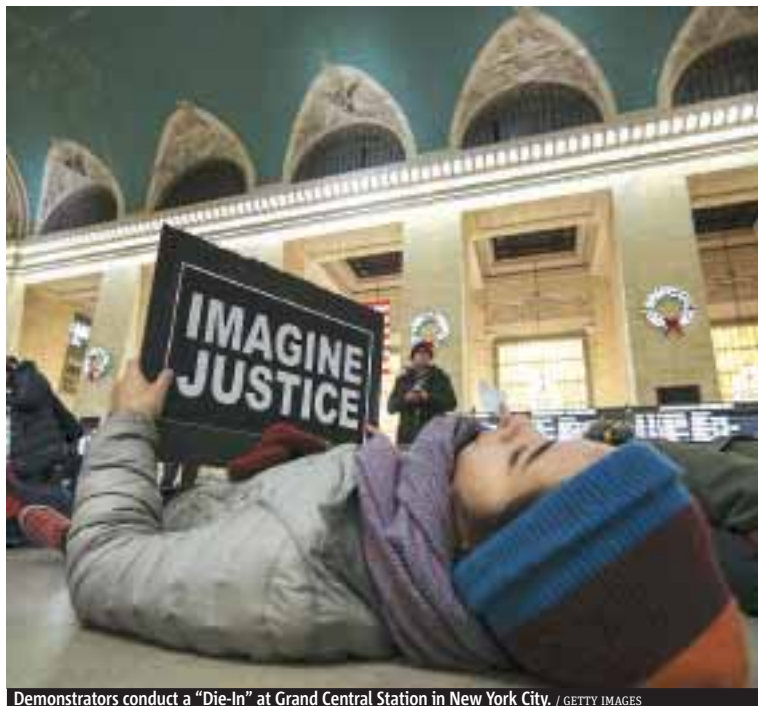
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Demonstrators conduct a "Die-In" at Grand Central Station in New York City. / GETTY IMAGES

ments prohibit chokeholds, but they are not illegal. In a statement to Reuters Monday, the Chicago Police Department said officers are trained to "position anyone in a manner that allows free

breathing." It has not taken a position on the ban.

Criminalizing chokeholds may pose a legal challenge for cities because of the difficulty of recognizing the maneuver, especially if it

lasts seconds, and of determining whether or not the officer intended to use it, said Arthur Lurigio, a criminal justice professor at Loyola University in Chicago.

REUTERS



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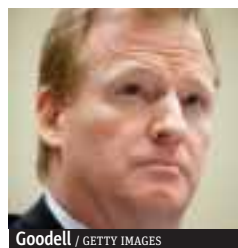
NEWS 10

NFL backs new personal conduct policy after incidents

New rules. It was unveiled at a regularly scheduled owners meeting in Irving, Texas.

National Football League owners on Wednesday unanimously endorsed what they called a "revised and strengthened" personal conduct policy in the wake of several domestic violence incidents involving players.

The NFL has come under fire over the last six months as it struggled with a personal conduct policy widely seen as too lenient. With big-money NFL sponsors watching closely, NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell



Goodell / GETTY IMAGES

embarked on a mission to strengthen the policy.

High-profile players have been in court over domestic abuse recently and the NFL has stumbled in some of its attempts to punish the players.

A special counsel for investigations and conduct will "decide the discipline for violations" of the new policy, said Goodell, who will still hear appeals but may appoint an independent panel to assist him.

The players union was not happy it was not part of the process.

"Our union has not been offered the professional courtesy of seeing the NFL's new personal conduct policy before it hit the presses," the NFL Players Union said in a statement. "Their unilateral decision and conduct today is the only thing that has been consistent over the past few months."

Among the changes are a "more extensive" list of prohibited conduct and NFL-funded counseling and services for victims, families and violators, Goodell said. **REUTERS**



The survey was conducted by Selzer & Co. / BILLY BECERRA, METRO

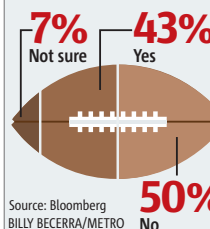
Poll. Half of US don't want their sons to play contact football

Television ratings are up and merchandise sales are booming, but longer-term trends don't look as rosy for football. According to a new Bloomberg Politics poll, only 17 percent believe it'll grow in popularity in the next 20 years.

These are grim numbers for a sport that's seeing an onslaught of negative attention, including a parade of National Football League players accused of abusing their wives or children; a team name so offensive that some news organizations refuse to print it; and, perhaps most troubling to parents, the growing body of evidence that repeated blows to the head can cause long-lasting brain damage. The sport's troubles have caught the attention of Congress, whose members hauled a league official to Washington for a Senate hearing earlier this month. Individual lawmakers have proposed ending the

Football poll

If you had a young son would you want him to play competitive football?



Source: Bloomberg
BILLY BECERRA/METRO

league's tax-exempt status and putting its coveted antitrust exception up for a five-year review.

The finding suggest that, over the course of time, football could go the way of boxing, a marquee American sport in the early part of the 20th century that declined amid a similar set of dynamics: changing perceptions of its brutality and star athletes making headlines for violent crimes. **BLOOMBERG**

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Malala and Satyarthi receive Nobel Prizes for child campaigns

Prize. Controversial choices in recent years include the European Union and President Barack Obama.

Pakistani teenager Malala Yousafzai, shot by the Taliban for refusing to quit school, and Indian activist Kailash Satyarthi received their Nobel Peace Prizes on Wednesday after two days of celebration honoring their work for children's rights.

Malala became by far the youngest laureate, widely praised for her global campaigning since she was shot in the head on her school bus in 2012. Some groups in Pakistan, however, have accused her of



Malala Yousafzai and Kailash Satyarthi accept their Nobel Peace Prize awards during the ceremony at Oslo City Town Hall. / GETTY IMAGES

being a puppet of the West and violating the tenets of conservative Islam.

"I tell my story, not because it is unique, but because it is not," said Malala, 17, better known by her first name, which is also the title of her book and the name of her foundation.

"It is the story of many girls," she said in Oslo's ornate city hall on the anniversary of Swedish industrialist Alfred Nobel's death.

"I've lost two of my colleagues," Satyarthi said about his work. "Carrying the dead body of a colleague who is fighting for the protection of children is something I'll never forget, even as I sit here to receive the Nobel Peace Prize."

Arriving in Norway with friends and young activists from Pakistan, Syria and Nigeria, Malala met thousands of children and walked the streets to greet supporters. **REUTERS**



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Photograph that's right on the money



Photography

Most expensive photo at \$6.5M

This picture shows the most expensive photograph in history: "Phantom", a black-and-white image by Australian landscape photographer Peter Lik of a "ghostlike" beam of light in Arizona's Antelope Canyon, was reportedly sold to a private collector for an unprecedented \$6.5 million. The record was previously held by Andreas Gursky's "Rhein II," which sold for \$4.3 million in 2011. **MWN**

Other sales

Photog noted for pricey pictures

The world-record-breaking sale also included two additional photographs by Lik: "Illusion" which sold for \$2.4 million and "Eternal Moods" for \$1.1 million, tallying up to a whopping \$10 million. Having previously sold a picture entitled "One" for \$1 million, the renowned antipodean photographer now accounts for four of the 20 priciest photographs ever sold. **MWN**



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CULTURE



Twitter feed

Today, John Stamos is facing a tough decision, Roseanne Barr has found the one, Judd Apatow doesn't want anyone reporting on the Sony hack and Joss Whedon has awards on his mind.

@JohnStamos: Morning sex or catch up sleep?

@therealroseanne: Thank god gays can marry! Now I can marry my tesla! #trueLove

@JuddApatow: in life we all decide what is right and I think printing private information because evil people leaked it is wrong.

@josswhedon: I don't care about Oscars. But my next project, "Mecha-Keanu vs Gun-Bot from Planet Titties: A Christmas Miracle" means they're all mine

That Sony hack is the gift that keeps on giving



Angie is not amused by Scott Rudin and Amy Pascal.
ALL PHOTOS GETTY IMAGES

Now that all the personal Social Security numbers and salary dust has settled from the massive Sony hack, we're starting to get down to some good Hollywood dirt. And let's just put it this way: Super-producer Scott Rudin almost certainly won't be working with Angelina Jolie again. In blistering emails back and forth with Sony chief Amy Pascal while trying to get their botched and abandoned Steve Jobs biopic moving, Rudin continually bashed Jolie and her desire for a big-budget Cleopatra movie

directed by David Fincher. How does Rudin really feel about Jolie? Here he is in his own words:

"I'm not destroying my career over a minimally talented spoiled brat," Rudin writes in an email to Pascal. "She's a camp event and a celebrity and that's all, and the last thing anybody needs is to make a giant bomb with her that any fool could see coming. We will end up being the laughing stock of our industry and we will deserve it." It looks like "Cleopatra" won't be starting production anytime soon.



THE WORD

Ned Ehrbar takes on the world of gossip.

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Lily Allen furious anyone would suggest she'd quit drinking

Lily Allen is livid over gossip reports that she is "trying to grow up" and giving up alcohol. Seriously, how dare they suggest such a thing? Instead, Allen took to Twitter to suggest that we all give up ... Twitter? "Let's give up social media and the Mail Online. It's killing me. That is all," Allen tweeted, though it clearly was not



actually all: "I feel like we're not evolved enough to handle the Internet, psychologically. I preferred real records and newspapers with news in them. Everything was just better and nicer. We were nicer. And I wouldn't be here." By here she means Twitter, which she thinks we should all give up. Got it.

Kim Kardashian considers weight gain God's punishment

Kim Kardashian has an interesting take on pregnancy weight — and how much time God spends thinking about her. In an interview with Elle's U.K. edition, the perfectly reasonable and sensible Mrs. Kanye West says of putting on weight while pregnant: "I'd think God was doing this for a reason. He was saying: 'Kim, you think you're so hot, but look what I can do to you.' My body just went crazy. After five months I swore I'd never get pregnant again. I got so huge and it felt like someone had taken over my body." A personal relationship with a higher power that spitefully has it in for her? Looks like some of her husband's worldview is rubbing off on her.

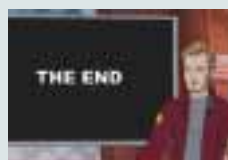


BACK WHEN GOD SHOWED HER WHO'S BOSS.

Daily video

How 'Guardians of the Galaxy' should have ended

You can now enjoy one of the year's biggest surprise hits, "Guardians of the Galaxy," in the comfort of



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But one feature you'll have to go online to see is the film getting the animated How It Should Have Ended treatment. Apparently, they think Ronan the Accuser should've won by totally destroying everything.

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Allen Leech likes living in the distant past



ALLEN LEECH
GETTY IMAGES FOR MULBERRY

Exclusive. The “Downton Abbey” star moves into the 1940s with “The Imitation Game,” but what he’d really like to do is just wear some jeans.

Irish actor Allen Leech first gained notoriety for starring as upstart chauffeur Tom Branson on “Downton Abbey.” While

that show has slowly crept through the first half of the 20th century, Leech himself is jumping forward a few years with “The Imitation Game,” starring as one of the WWII mathematicians who help Alan Turing (Benedict Cumberbatch) crack the Nazi Enigma machine.

It’s amazing to think how Turing was persecuted for being gay, and now we have Tim Cook, the CEO of Apple, coming out. I know, and it’s crazy. It just shows how far we’ve come as a society that we can now turn around and celebrate that rather than what happened to Alan



From left, Allen Leech, Benedict Cumberbatch and Matthew Beard star in “The Imitation Game.” / JACK ENGLISH

Isis the dog

There’s been a lot speculation about what will happen to the dog on “Downton Abbey,” since it unfortunately shares a name with an Islamic terrorist group.

It’s funny that that’s come up. Bear in mind that we shoot the show months and months in advance, so anything that does happen to the dog, Isis, I think has less to do with the terrorist group than people think.

Turing. What could Turing have achieved if he wasn’t put under that medication? If his mind hadn’t been taken from him and he ultimately had no choice but to take his own life? So I think it’s wonderful now that the CEO of Apple can turn around and say, “Yeah, I’m gay” and it be celebrated. I read that news off an iPhone, which couldn’t exist if it wasn’t for Turing’s ideas.

Between this film and “Downton Abbey,” are you looking forward to doing something that doesn’t require early 20th

century period clothing? [Laughs] You know, it’s interesting how the amount of time that I have to wear period clothes adds up throughout my career. But yeah, I wouldn’t mind wearing a pair of jeans in a scene. It would be nice not to take about 45 minutes to get into costume in the morning.

The clothes do look good. Oh yeah, it’s great. And the trendy hairstyles today are very ‘30s- and ‘40s-esque.

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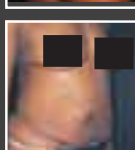


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'Exodus: Gods and Kings'

1 Having already played Jesus, John Rolfe and Batman, Christian Bale adds Moses to his CV, albeit one who talks to God not through a burning bush but through a petulant 9-year-old bully. Joel Edgerton and John Turturro co-star as Egyptians, both buried under a ton of mascara.

'Top Five'

2 Chris Rock hasn't had a ton of luck with films, but he finally gets there with his third directorial work — an improv- and cameo-heavy semi-serious comedy in which he plays a movie star spending the day flirting with a New York Times journo (Rosario Dawson).

'Inherent Vice'

3 If anyone's going to make a solid movie out of the powerfully unadaptable Thomas Pynchon, it would be Paul Thomas Anderson. Joaquin Phoenix leads a seriously all-star cast as a private dick in 1970 investigating a zany and, in true Pynchon fashion, hard-to-follow plot.

'The Magician: The Astonishing Life and Work of Orson Welles'

4 Amazingly, Orson Welles has few "101" docs that cover his entire multi-part, shape-shifting career from boy genius who conquered theater, radio and film to infrequently employed, damaged genius who has trouble completing his masterpieces.

ADMIT ONE

Metro rounds up what's in cinemas this week.

MATT PRIGGE
matt.prigge@metro.us

'The Captive'

5 Chilly Canadian filmmaker Atom Egoyan ("The Sweet Hereafter") hasn't made a masterwork in ages, but he tries again with this thriller about a haunted father (Ryan Reynolds) trying to find his daughter, who was kidnapped eight years before.

'The Color of Time'

6 James Franco, artist, is at it again, with another film experiment on a not very adaptation-friendly source. This time he wrangles 12 NYU students to make a film from C.K. Williams poems, featuring not only Franco but Mila Kunis, Jessica Chastain and more.

'The Hunger Games: Mockingjay — Part 1'

7 Suzanne Collins' dystopian saga is the latest to have one of its books divided into two movies, though this means all the big action is pushed off until "Part 2," which won't come out for another year.



Blinged-out pharaoh Joel Edgerton faces off against Christian Bale's Moses in "Exodus: Gods and Kings." / KERRY BROWN

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Q&A JOAQUIN PHOENIX DON'T GET HIGH BEFORE SEEING 'INHERENT VICE'

Interview. The Oscar-nominated actor says it would be redundant to explore the dopey detective story while stoned.

"Inherent Vice" marks the second time, after "The Master," that Joaquin Phoenix has teamed with director Paul Thomas Anderson, and this one couldn't be more different. For one, it's an adaptation of a Thomas Pynchon novel. For another, it features a twisty detective plot centered on his stoner detective. But that doesn't mean Phoenix thinks you

should smoke up before watching.

Are you worried about some people finding the plot of this hard to follow?

I would say that it's a movie to be experienced. Like, I think that if you're sitting there and trying to figure it out, I think you're going to miss a lot of the beauty of the film. It really is something where the texture of the movie, the tone of it, is such a wonderful experience. It's just this haze. I remember when I was done watching it, I didn't realize how much I'd been transported into this other world because Paul just lulls you into this state. I think the best experience is to just

go along for the ride and not try to figure it all out.

Would you suggest people get stoned before they see it?

Um, I don't know; I don't think so. Because I feel like the movie gives you that feeling [anyway], do you know what I mean? So I wouldn't suggest it.

How does it differ coming into a project when you have something as dense as this novel versus just a script?
There's things that you loved so much in the book you want to get into the film but you just can't. There's a lot of characters that were



JOAQUIN PHOENIX
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Joaquin Phoenix's stoner P.I. in "Inherent Vice" gets close with guest Reese Witherspoon. / WILSON WEBB

The master

So, I have to ask: Is Pynchon in the film?

I don't know. I really don't know. It's funny because I feel like kind of a d— now, but I never asked. I just assumed that he wasn't around. My publicist showed me something where Josh [Brolin] had said that he showed up, and I was like, "How did Josh know?" I felt a little bit left out, like, did Paul tell Josh and didn't tell me? [Laughs]

just left out. It's just tough for me. It was a bit of a struggle, because I wanted to remain confused and naive about the story — which isn't difficult to do. You'd have to read it a hundred times, like Paul did, to really get your head around it. But I always wanted to remain in that state, and it's something that Paul really stirred up. He would combine certain characters or take dialogue from one character and apply it to another — just stir everything up and create this sense of confusion where I didn't really know what was what.

Was working on this different than on "The Master"?

There's probably a difference, but everything is different. This felt much more open in a way, you know what I mean? When we worked on "The Master," it felt so intimate.

Do you have any sense or when you might work with him again?

No, but I'd love to. I hope I work with him many, many times.



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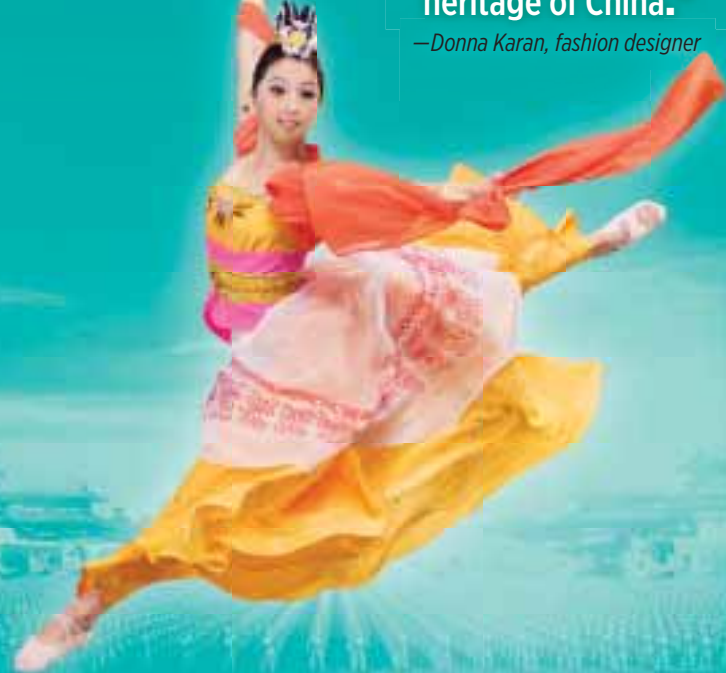


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Interview. Texas band Centro-matic hits the road one last time for their farewell tour

After 18 years, 11 full-length recordings, seven EPs and countless days on the road, Centro-matic has decided to call it a career as they prepare to embark on one final tour. There was no bad blood that led to the decision and none of the typical drama that tends to end bands — just the knowledge that it's time to wind down and celebrate the end of their career as they began it: on their own terms.

After their recent release, "Take Pride in Your Long Odds," Will Johnson and company agreed that it might be time for a formal farewell.

"We encountered a handful of scheduling conflicts with regard to touring. I was also at the point writing-wise where I haven't been writing much rock music. I always said if we ever got to that point where we couldn't be a true band and give it the best we could, that I didn't want it to be hobbled and



Get ready to say goodbye. See Centro-matic play for probably the last time tonight at Rough Trade (64 N. 9th St., Brooklyn) and the Mercury Lounge (217 E. Houston St., New York) on Thursday. / MATT PENCE

limp along. We made the decision and figured out a way to do this in the most celebrated way we could. We decided to handpick all the bills, pick all the openers, play all the rooms we've loved over the years, work with the promoters that we've enjoyed working with and really take it for one last, true, fun lap instead of dissolving and going away," says Johnson.

He first joined forces with Matt Pence, Scott

Danbom and Mark Hedman in 1997. Quickly becoming the pride of Denton, Texas, Centro-matic evolved from their lo-fi beginnings to a fleshed-out rock band defined by dynamics and dedication.

"I think the thing I'm most proud of is that we have maintained a care and compassion for each other over the years as we've basically become adults together," notes Johnson. "We started this

thing when we were living in small little shanty-type rent houses in Denton, right out of college trying to figure out what to do with our lives and trying to figure out who we were. And we've kept this lineup intact. I'm really proud of the type of racket that we've been able to make together. We make a specific sound that I think represents our friendships and our history together."

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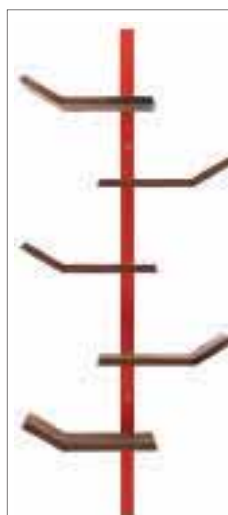
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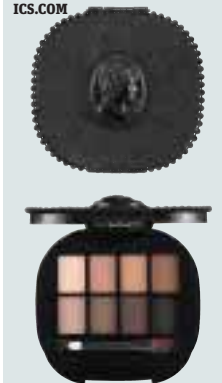
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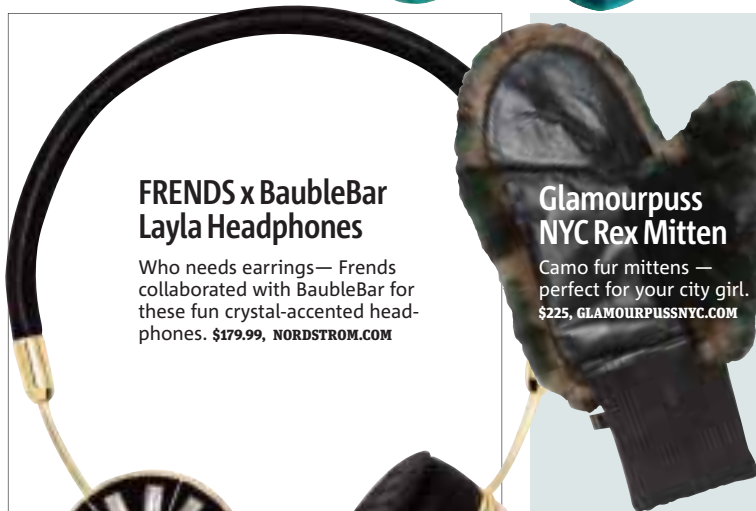
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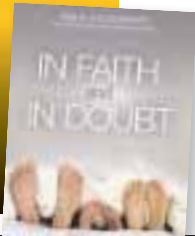


PLUS

Important reminder

Mutual respect is key

Expressing your true feelings is essential to the success of any relationship, says McGowan. "It's a question of respect. Sometimes I hear people say, 'Sometimes I struggle with this because I can't respect what my partner believes.' But you don't have to agree on beliefs, what you do have to say is, 'I respect my partner.'"



Compromises are key for atheist-religious couples

Respect.

Communication about boundaries is essential.

The holidays can be particularly stressful for couples who don't share the same spiritual or religious views. Should an atheist attend midnight mass with the in-laws? Are Christmas trees or menorahs OK? Without clear expectations, getting through December with

your nerves intact can be challenging.

"Everybody has to negotiate — neither partner can declare everything non-negotiable. That's not OK," says Dale McGowan, a longtime



You have to decide when and where to compromise. / POLKA DOT

atheist and the author of the book "In Faith and in Doubt." "What they have to do is pick and choose. Asking their partner to give up everything is not fair."

McGowan shares his thoughts on how couples can respect both of their belief systems and

strengthen their relationship in the process.

Should everyone attend services?

That depends. McGowan says every couple should talk about their negotiables and non-negotiables.

"My wife's extended family is quite religious and I go to church every year with my mother-in-law," explains McGowan, who says his wife was a Southern Baptist when they married 23 years ago. "For me, going to church with her was a perfectly fine compromise and a way to

honor a part of our family. That meant a lot to her."

Some things can't be compromised

"If you have an atheist who had a painful separation from religion, it can be really difficult for someone to attend church," explains McGowan. "People have to respect that." If you or your partner feel like you absolutely cannot participate in religious activities, it's vital that you talk about it. "Maybe the family will go and they'll just explain that dad is going to stay home," McGowan says.



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Keep your spirits bright

Winter. The frightful weather just makes the indoors that much more delightful.

Winter can be hard on even the most holiday-spirited. Short days of either freezing rain or driving snow, the subways are somehow always too hot or too cold, and everything feels like too much effort. But NYC has seen a lot more winters come and go than you or I, and it's got plenty of ways to help you get through it — and maybe even enjoy the season.

Festive eats

The beauty of singing during the holidays is everyone is either too drunk or too happy to care if you're tone deaf. At **Zum Schneider** (107 Ave. C, Alphabet City), they're likely to be both. For the next two Sundays beginning at 1 p.m., the restaurant will be serving a special holiday menu (though the cookies and German fruitcake are free) and providing songbooks to diners to sing holiday carols. You'll be accompanied not just by clicking steins, but by a two-man band of guitar, accordion and dulcimer.

It's worth browsing the opulent shrines to consumerism that are Midtown department stores' holiday window displays. To warm up after your trek, head below **The**



Relax in the urban ski chalet that is Hudson Lodge. / PROVIDED



The Plaza Food Hall has been decked.
EVA KIS, METRO

Plaza Hotel (1 W. 59th St., Midtown) to its food hall, which just rounded out its tenant list with Epicerie Boulud and is all decked out in Christmas finery.

Defrost with a beverage

The city doesn't have an

pot pie and housemade ginger wine (for the Hot Toddlies) will cheer your taste buds.

The opulent velvet and leather couches that dominate **Raines Law Room** (48 W. 17th St., Flatiron) beckon you to curl up with an expert Prohibition-era cocktail. You won't even have to leave your nook to get another round, with service bells at each table.

Saks Fifth Avenue (611 Fifth Ave.) has festive treats for grown-ups and big kids, with two pop-up bars: drink hot chocolate with a winter wonderland of mix-ins at Jacques Torres' ninth-floor cocoa bar, while Veuve Clicquot set up shop on the fifth with a bubble soda fountain where you can also get small bites.

While you're complaining about the gray and

Meow Parlour

Make a friend

Enjoy the mood-boosting company of a friendly (and adoptable!) kitty at NYC's first permanent cat cafe, Meow Parlour (46 Hester St.) with treats from Cat Lady-in-Chief Christina Ha.



PURRFECT TREATS
PROVIDED

rain, just remember we only suffer it for a few months. But our British cousins are seasoned (get it?) veterans. Escape into the shabby chic **Tea & Sympathy** (108 Greenwich Ave.) with its floral-patterned tea sets and hearty English meals.

Light display

Window displays aren't the only creative projects going on around town. **Brookfield Place** (200 Vesey St., FiDi) is hosting "Metamorphosis," a nightly light display from dusk to midnight whose colors and patterns change every day through the end of the exhibit on Dec. 31.



EVA KIS
@thisiskis
eva.kis@metro.us

Three places to pretend it's July

Premier 57

Spa Castle, our favorite Korean water park/spa, has expanded to Manhattan with less whimsy, but more luxury. No more kiddos (under 16 anyway) and while not as cavernous, there are still 39,000 feet of indoor and outdoor pools — saltwater, hydrotherapy and one heated to 190 degrees to really get rid of the winter chill. The main pool even has a swim-up bar! Day pass \$65, 9 a.m. to midnight, seven days a week. **114 E. 57th St., Midtown**

Kingston Hall

This tiki-meets-pub bar in the East Village has fireplaces and palm trees, a pool table and beverages served in coconuts. Grab a Caribbean dish like the jerk pork sliders and close your eyes while sipping from your Drunken Coconut — it's almost like... well, no, you're still in NYC, but how much can be wrong with life when there's a rum-based drink in your hand? (And they're two-for-one until 8 p.m.) **149 Second Ave., East Village**

Royal Palms Shuffleboard Court

Get a head start on becoming the reigning shuffleboard champion at your future Florida retirement community in this Brooklyn bar. Games are \$40 per hour, so pull those khaki shorts and pastel polos out of summer storage, pull up those socks as high as they'll go and have some silly fun. **514 Union St., Brooklyn**
EVA KIS



It's never too early to be the best on the shuffleboard court.
PROVIDED

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Unconventional

Three out-of-the-box shows

After 60 years of performing George Balanchine's "The Nutcracker," the New York City Ballet have it down pat. (The shows continue through Jan. 3 at Lincoln Center Plaza, FYI.) But this year, we tweak tradition.

Byzantine Holiday Pop-Up Concerts

Dec. 12 & 19; 2, 4, 6 p.m.
Metropolitan Museum
Free with admission,
metmuseum.org

On Fridays this month, hear Byzantine-era carols and hymns from the balcony above the Medieval Sculpture Hall. Check out the museum's Neapolitan Christmas tree and crèche, too.

'Not the Messiah'

Dec. 15-16,
Carnegie Hall
\$30+, carnegiehall.org

The title continues with "He's a Very Naughty Boy," which is redundant if you know that this is a musical comedy adaptation of "Monty Python's Life of Brian," by no less than the creators of "Spamalot."

'Nutcracker Rouge'

Dec. 18-Jan. 4, 8 p.m.
XIV, 428 Lafayette St.
\$75-\$175
companyXIV.com

This 21+ show contains partial nudity, and we bet there isn't another Christmas tradition that can make that claim. Reimagined with "erotic, sensual and opulent flair," this Baroque-burlesque production will range from dance to opera to circus.

MUSIC

'Tears become ... streams become ...'

Armory on Park, 643 Park Ave. Through Dec. 21, Sunday 7 p.m. Tues/Wed/Fri/Sat. 8 p.m. \$45-\$90, armoryonpark.org
In a feat of engineering and imagination, the Armory slowly floods over an hour as pianist Helene Grimaud plays pieces from Debussy, Liszt and more. As the hall becomes a shallow pool, creating the effect of standing on the brink of a parallel world, lighting and smoke add to the disorienting effect. The installation is also open to visitors outside of showtimes.



JAMES EWING

Free, chinachaletrestaurant.com
It's ugly sweater season so don't be shy, everyone's sporting them. Don your ugliest piece of wool, cotton, whatever and get down to the hot spot for magic holiday treats, drinking games, giveaways and prizes, drunk food and smooth jams spun by DJ Black Irish.

FOOD

SNFYC Book Club: 'The 3-Day Reset'

Dec. 14, 1 p.m.
National Gourmet Institute
48 W. 21st St. #2
Free w/RSVP, slowfoodnyc.org
Join author Pooja Mottl for a chat, tasting and book signing as you learn how to reset your system in only 72 hours with Mottl's method to change your cravings from delicious junk food to delicious wholesome food.

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TALKS

What's Nu: The State of Brooklyn's Jewish Delis

Dec. 11, 6:30 p.m.
Brooklyn Historical Society
128 Pierrepont St., Brooklyn Heights
\$10, brooklynhistory.org
While the day of the Jewish deli on every Brooklyn corner has come and gone, there are still a few out there that continue to dish out the corned beef with that old school charm. Check out this convo between deli historian Ted Merwin and a few deli folk from Junior's, Mile End, and Jay and Lloyd's Kosher Deli. Don't you wish you'd majored in deli history in college?

SHOPPING

Holiday Handmade Cavalcade

Dec. 13-14, 10 a.m.
Chelsea Market
75 Ninth Ave.
Free, handmadecavalcade.com
Buy some unique gifts from local small businesses this holiday season like clothing, jewelry, accessories, paper goods, soaps and more. Take your chances at some big prizes in a raffle and show up early — the first 100 people through the door each day will receive a goodie bag.

SHOPPING



KATE MILFORD

Pop² Brooklyn Holiday Pop-Up Market

Dec. 12-13, 4 p.m.
200 Livingston St.; Free, downtownbrooklyn.com
Over 25 Brooklyn-based vendors will participate in the two-day pop-up market with food trucks, beer, art installations, DJs and more. Shamanic Stylist, Mynlyn, Sole Rebel Art, Jwhite, Mitch Mallows and Brooklyn Oenology are a few confirmed vendors, while Mexicue, Mamu Thai Noodle and Red Hook Lobster Pound are a few confirmed food trucks. Eat, drink, shop, repeat.

you can drink while you shop why not do it? Your ticket to this Holiday Book Market gives you access to an open bar and a chance to mingle with local authors and other fine booze lovers. Booze, books about booze and booze lovers — sounds like a party and learning experience in one!

global traveling bookstore and parking it right here in NYC for the weekend. With a collection of hand-picked books from their own literary agents, you're guaranteed to find that gift for your special someone ... or yourself! Plus Amy Sedaris, Emma Straub, Meg Wolitzer and more authors will participate in live in-store events.

WME's Gimme Books Holiday Pop-Up Bookstore

Dec. 13-14, 1 p.m.
2 Rivington St.
Free, wmeentertainment.com
WME are taking their curated

PARTY

The Ugly Sweater Party 3

Dec. 13, 10 p.m.
China Chalet
47 Broadway

Latke Festival

Dec. 15, 7:30 p.m.
Metropolitan Pavilion
125 W. 18th St.
\$60, greatperformances.com
Kick off Hannukah with your favorite holiday treat, latkes! Restaurants like Jimmy's No. 43, The Plaza Hotel and Baz Bagel battle it out by serving up their own take on the latke as judged by the people, as well as official judges, including NBA Commissioner Emeritus David Stern, the Brooklyn Roasting Company's Michael Pollack and more.

SCIENCE

Winter Skies Telescope Party

Dec. 15, 6:30 p.m.
Hayden Planetarium, American Museum of Natural History
Central Park West at 79th St.
\$15, amnh.org
The winter sky is home to amazing things, and a couple of astronomers want to take you for a ride inside Hayden's Space Theater to show you how to observe them. After checking out the sweet nebulas and open clusters, step outside for a guided tour of the night sky with the Amateur Astronomers Association.

MUSIC

The Sweater Songs

Dec. 17, 8 p.m.
Brooklyn Bowl
61 Wythe Ave., Williamsburg
\$8-\$10, brooklynbowl.com
If you want to destroy my sweater ... well, here's your chance! The Sweater Songs will play Weezer's "Blue Album," plus songs from "Pinkerton" and more. Watch them unravel with these classic jams. **JAY HONSTETTER**

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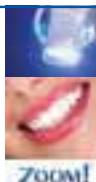
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Horoscope

♐ **Sagittarius** | Nov. 22-Dec. 21. Long-term connections and valuable information will come your way from a social or business gathering.

♑ **Capricorn** | Dec. 22-Jan. 20. You will have good luck when it comes to money matters if you have scrutinized the details carefully. A joint venture is worth looking into.

♒ **Aquarius** | Jan. 21-Feb. 18. Love and romance will be on your mind. Now is the time to make a commitment or promise to someone important to you.

♓ **Pisces** | Feb. 19-March 20. Someone you thought you could trust is likely to betray you. Collect your thoughts before doing anything you may regret.

♈ **Aries** | March 21-April 20. Great achievements can be made. Strike a deal, take on a new challenge, complete a creative project or engage in romance. Take the initiative and don't look back.

♉ **Taurus** | April 21-May 21. Make sure all the cards are on the table before signing up for a partnership. An unpleasant surprise is likely if you don't do your research.

♊ **Gemini** | May 22-June 20. Social media makes it easy to get in touch with an old friend. It will be refreshing to talk to someone who understands your background.

♋ **Cancer** | June 21-July 22. Spend your leisure time doing something you enjoy. Filling your schedule with chores, repair jobs or shopping will leave you no time to recharge your batteries.

♌ **Leo** | July 23-Aug. 22. This is a great day for family fun. Remember to include young people. Host a party with people you don't see regularly.

♍ **Virgo** | Aug. 23-Sept. 22. Mixing business with pleasure will bring a new perspective regarding your career goals. You will learn a lot by listening.

♎ **Libra** | Sept. 23-Oct. 22. Nothing will escape your notice. Pay attention to detail and carefully gauge what needs to be done and how much it will cost.

♏ **Scorpio** | Oct. 23-Nov. 21. Your ingenuity and creativity are in full swing. Increase your visibility by contacting people who are in a position to recommend you. **EUGENIA LAST**

Letters

Lay blame where it's due

Re: 'Black lives matter' (Metro, Dec. 10) Here we go again, blaming the victims. Perhaps crime rates are high in those areas because of the systematic dehumanization and marginalization of black folks in this country. If people were given equal opportunities and equal treatment, and were not oppressed to the point of exhaustion, things would be different because neighborhoods would be different.

DELORES PAULK, VIA EMAIL

cars, too — so maybe the DAs and police need to realize how badly their corruption is backfiring. And I'm 10 times more angry at the crooked DAs than I am the meathead thug cops. These people are destroying America and should be held accountable. Step One: Remove any and all immunity district attorneys and judges enjoy. The ONLY standard should be if they broke the law, versus the current system, which says "it's OK for them to break the laws and violate due process and other federally guaranteed laws cuz we just say they are immune from being prosecuted."

LARKIN NOVAK, VIA EMAIL

Sudoku: Easy and hard

8				2		7		
	1	9			5	3		2
	5		6		7			
		1				9		5
	2						3	
9		3				8		
			9		6		1	
3		4	7			5	8	
		5		8				9

		6		9				
	8		3		1	2		
	9				4	8		7
7				3	6	5		
8								4
		3	4	5				8
1		8	2				5	
		4	6		3	2		
			1		4			

How to play

Fill in the grid so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved. You solve the puzzle with reasoning and logic.

I've been a law-abiding citizen my whole life, and a pacifist, too, but I must say that the Garner scandal has me wanting to smash windows and burn

letters@metro.us

Keep them as brief as possible, preferably under 100 words. Metro reserves the right to edit all letters. Please include your name and contact info.

Visit us online at **Metro.us**.

Use your smartphone to find today's crossword answers! Download and open the Blippar app on your smartphone and hold the screen over the puzzle.



Crossword

Across

- 1 Change position
- 6 Bank protector
- 10 Planets, to poets
- 14 Lofty abode
- 15 "Cope Book" aunt
- 16 Sugar-cane cutter
- 17 Jumbo
- 18 Caboose's spot
- 19 Black, to Donne
- 20 "The Thin Man" pooch
- 21 Enlarging
- 23 Cut-out pattern
- 25 Mixtures
- 26 Noncom
- 27 Murmured softly
- 29 Solitude enjoyer
- 32 Trial setting
- 33 — cit. (footnote abbr.)
- 36 Under the covers
- 37 Kind of cavity
- 38 Retro art style
- 39 British FBI
- 40 Trills lightheartedly
- 41 Corsair's quest
- 42 Hayseeds
- 43 Drag behind
- 44 Henchman
- 47 Walter Scott novel
- 51 "Oh, — were Paradise enow!"
- 54 Hold up well
- 55 Newsman — Abel

- 56 Dubuque's state
- 57 Island near Sicily
- 58 Noted prep school
- 59 Part of WATS
- 60 Iroquois speakers
- 61 Furtive whisper
- 62 DEA operative
- 63 Love

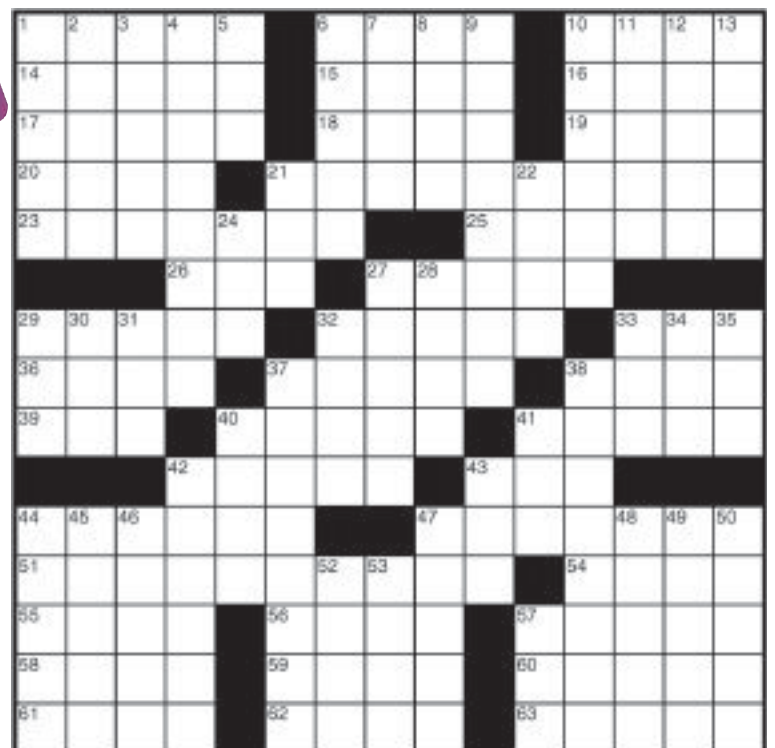
Down

- 1 Epics
- 2 Second-story job
- 3 Fit to be tied
- 4 Bankrolled
- 5 Lunar new year
- 6 Like an alley cat
- 7 Remnant
- 8 Bowie's wife
- 9 Reindeer
- 10 Did as told
- 11 Worm seeker
- 12 Golden-haired
- 13 Ballads
- 21 A thousand G's
- 22 Leave in a hurry
- 24 Paramedic's skill
- 27 Loose change
- 28 Heavy burden
- 29 Insect resin
- 30 "Shogun" apparel
- 31 Rorem or Beatty
- 32 Disgusting

- 33 Zodiac sign
- 34 Fall mo.
- 35 Bashful
- 37 Tundra dweller
- 38 Lower
- 40 Racing sled
- 41 Anaconda
- 42 Hamster or guinea pig
- 43 Motel room fixtures
- 44 Win every game
- 45 Slants
- 46 Potpourris
- 47 Asimov of sci-fi
- 48 Sun, in combos
- 49 Movie with a posse
- 50 Rub out
- 52 Ibsen heroine
- 53 Big pitcher
- 57 Give — — break



Yesterday's answer



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3

SPORTS



MLB

Cashman quiet on Scherzer

Yankees general manager Brian Cashman didn't close the door on New York's potential pursuit of Tigers ace Max Scherzer, but he didn't exactly say the Yanks were banging down that door for a free agent deal with the righty either. "It's not in my best interest to say," Cashman told ESPN.



Visit **Metro.us** to read about Jon Lester signing with the Cubs.

Agents differ in opinion when it comes to Idzik

NFL. NFL player agents with mixed reviews of the job John Idzik is doing.

Doing business with Jets general manager John Idzik is supposed to be ex-cruciating and described as "glacial" in terms of pace. But for at least one agent who has worked with Idzik for two decades, he has seen nothing but positives from the embattled general manager.

Howard Shatsky has been an agent since 1989 and he now runs his own firm, Professional Football Management. With clients that included Michael Strahan and Brian Westbrook among others, Shatsky has had a business relationship with Idzik for much of his representation career.

"Over the years I signed many players with John," Shatsky said. "John Idzik is one of the truly nice guys in the NFL. While I realize that may not matter to fans,



Woody Johnson, right, has a big decision looming when it comes to John Idzik's, left, future. / GETTY IMAGES

it does have a huge impact with agents. In my dealings with him, John has always been upfront, honest and straightforward. That type of person can be a huge asset to a team when trying to get a deal done or sign a player in free agency."

Not everyone agrees with Shatsky. One prominent NFL agent, who has

had several players on the Jets since Idzik's time with the team began and others who the Jets had inquired about during free agency, didn't want to speak on the record, "because that might ruin whatever relationship I have left with the team." But he sees flaws with the current GM.

"You want to see some movement from the man

Quoted

"Sometimes you have to have big balls for this role. [Idzik] is smart, he doesn't make bad decisions. He's a great guy. But you need those balls."

An NFL player agent, on the job John Idzik has done as Jets general manager

you're talking with, and John always seemed to be putting things off and waiting for the situation to dictate things, not the other way around. You have to be proactive in free agency and offering deals, not always hedging," the agent told Metro. "Sometimes you have to have big balls in this business. I'm not sure John has the big balls for this role. He's smart, he doesn't make bad decisions. He's a great guy. But you need those balls. You have to be willing to take a risk and he's too calculated. I want to see him roll up his sleeves and play the hand he's got."

Of course, those comments are from an agent who might feel slighted after not getting the deal from the Jets he wanted to during free agency.

Earlier this week, Shatsky took to Twitter to defend Idzik. He's upset about the way Jets fans are attacking Idzik, who hasn't even completed two years on the job.

"Perhaps John may have moved a bit too slow for the fans in New York. Having grown up in New Jersey as a Jet fan, I know firsthand how demanding the New York fans can be," Shatsky said. "Having said that, if I was an NFL owner, I would prefer my GM make well thought-out, rational decisions. There are times when you need to move quickly, but in most cases, slow and steady wins the race. The NFL is a marathon, not a sprint."



KRISTIAN DYER
@KristianDyer
sports@metro.us

DON'T BE AFRAID TO GO WITH SOME NEW DANCE PARTNERS

Now that the fantasy semifinals are here, the little man inside your head will tell you to dance with the girl you brought to the party. Squash that voice.

The increased stakes only mean we need to follow our process even tighter now. All year we've been aggressively playing matchups and getting ahead of the points, not chasing them. That means taking some risks with unproven guys, even in the playoffs. The best options:

Donte's inferno

It took the Colts nearly four months, but they now realize freakishly talented rookie Donte Moncrief (50 snaps Week 13) is better



Johnny Manziel may actually be a good fantasy play this week. / GETTY IMAGES

than washed up Hakeem Nicks (18 snaps). That's exciting by itself, but what makes it really scintillating is the demise of Reggie Wayne. It's gotten so bad for Wayne that the Colts are openly talking about shutting him down for a bit, which would turn Moncrief into the No. 2 receiver for Andrew Luck. In a home game against a Houston defense giving up the second-most fantasy points to wideouts, "Man" Crief is likely a better option than the No. 3 wideout on your playoff squad.

Mr. Wilson's hood

Brandon Marshall's season-ending rib/lung injury is

Marquess Wilson's gain. This is a 6-foot-4 wideout that was highly productive in the Pac-12 before getting into a spat with his coach. So the Bears got a mid-round talent in the seventh round of the 2013 draft and he earned the No. 3 job with exemplary play this offseason, impressing pass-game guru Marc Trestman. Wilson gets his big breakout chance Monday, where he'll be facing a terrible Saints secondary at home. Top Saints corner Keenan Lewis projects to shadow Alshon Jeffery, leaving Wilson to do work.

Here's Johnny

Browns OC Kyle Shanahan

knows how to handle a running quarterback. All we have to do is go back to 2012, when a then-healthy Robert Griffin III went berserk with Shanny at the controls. Now he has Johnny Manziel, more of an improvisational runner than RG3, but just as dangerous. Manziel will also have Jordan Cameron and Josh Gordon, and is at home facing a Bengals defense that has struggled to contain running quarterbacks. Johnny Football is set up for a big statistical splash in his first NFL start.



FANTASY SPORTS
ADAM LEVITAN
alevitan@metro.us

NBA. Carmelo and Hardaway far from BFFs as the Knicks continue to pile up losses in 2014-15 season

Knicks president Phil Jackson is no longer associated with the Lakers, but the Knicks would be wise — at this point — to borrow Magic Johnson's recent philosophy regarding LA hoops: "keep on losing."

The Knicks (4-19) had the fourth worst record in the NBA entering Wednesday night's game at San Antonio, but the worse things get, the closer New York will get to landing a top 2015 draft pick. NBADraft.net has the Knicks selecting Kentucky center Karl-Anthony Towns in their most recent 2015 mock draft.

Additional proof that the Knicks 2014-15 season is going nowhere surfaced Wednesday when ESPN reported that there is great tension between Carmelo Anthony and Tim Hardaway Jr. Sources told ESPN that Anthony and Hardaway "haven't cared for each other almost



Carmelo Anthony is averaging 22.9 points per game this season.

GETTY IMAGES

since Hardaway joined the team last season, with each player believing the other shoots too much and doesn't care about defense."

The Knicks are at Boston Friday (7:30 p.m., MSG) before returning home to face the Raptors Sunday (7:30 p.m., MSG).

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